

Prison Sentence for Hockessin Killing

Prosecutors also secure guilty pleas to drug, weapons, and rape charges

The New York man who shot and killed a Hockessin man was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Deputy Attorneys General Brian Robertson, Cari Chapman, Matthew Keating, and Abby Adams prosecuted the case against Benjamin Rauf, 29, of Westerlo, NY. In August 2015, Shazim Uppal, a law school classmate of Rauf, was found dead after being shot multiple times while sitting in his parked car on Saint Claire Drive not far from his home in Hockessin. Earlier this month, Rauf pled guilty to Manslaughter and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony. A Superior Court judge sentenced Rauf to 15 years in prison, followed by 6 months of home confinement or work release, then 2 years of probation during which Rauf must complete 100 hours of community service each year involving either youth outreach or legal training to assist the less privileged. Paralegals Kim Moro and Kelly Drzymalski, and social worker Crystal Pitts assisted with the case. Retired New Castle County Police detective John Ziemba was the Chief Investigating Officer.

A large-scale heroin dealer in the Riverside section of Wilmington pled guilty to several charges related to a criminal enterprise involving drugs and guns. Deputy Attorneys General Mark Denney and Erika Flaschner secured the plea from 29-year-old Kiayre Braxton to Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Racketeering, Drug Dealing Heroin (Tier 4 or higher), and 3 counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony. In February 2018, police alleged Braxton was continuing the heroin sales of a criminal network and executed a search warrant at his home, finding 50 logs of fentanyl-laced heroin and 3 firearms. Based in part on previous

convictions on other distributing heroin charges, a Superior Court judge sentenced Braxton to 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ years in prison, followed by 6 months of home confinement or work release, then 2 years of probation. Detective Steven Barnes of the Wilmington Police Department, Detective Mark Hogate of the Delaware State Police, Special Agent Shawn Haney of the FBI, and paralegal Shanaya Eyong worked tirelessly to secure this result.

Deputy Attorney General Rebecca Anderson secured a guilty plea from a Milford man who raped a woman in her own home. Kamau Graves, 31, pled to 2 counts of Rape Third Degree and 1 count of Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony. In October 2018, Graves went to the victim's Milford home saying he was looking for her boyfriend. When learning the boyfriend wasn't there, Graves asked to use the bathroom, then, threatening the woman with a knife he took from her kitchen, raped her. A Superior Court judge will sentence Graves in April following a pre-sentence investigation. Social Worker Carla Ennals assisted with the case.

A 33-year-old Seaford man pled guilty to charges connected to the rape of a minor. Deputy Attorney General Casey L. Ewart secured the plea from Harry Dwain Croft to charges of Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child and Rape Third Degree for repeatedly engaging in sexual activity with a teenager from the middle of 2017 into 2018. A Superior Court judge immediately sentenced Croft to 4 years in prison including the completion of the Transitions sex offender program, followed by 10 years of probation. Croft must also register as a Tier 3 sex offender and wear a GPS monitoring bracelet upon his release from prison. Administrative Specialist Angelique Waters, Paralegal Veronica McKain, and Victim/Witness Social Worker Carla Ennals at the Department of Justice assisted with the prosecution of this case, which was investigated by Lieutenant Robert J. Legates of the Millsboro Police Department.